



The County Seat

News from the Leesburg District

February 2003

From Mark Herring
Loudoun County Board of Supervisors

Welcome! *The County Seat: News from the Leesburg District* is an electronic newsletter to update you on recent events related to the Loudoun County Government and the actions of the Board of Supervisors, especially as they affect residents in the Leesburg District. I am hopeful *The County Seat* will help you stay informed about your County government and improve communications with me as your elected representative on the Board. I invite you to read the updates in this issue and welcome your comments and opinions.

Mark Herring
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Board Adopts New Countywide Zoning Ordinance

On Monday, January 6, 2003, the board adopted revisions to the county's zoning ordinance and a new zoning map as part of the implementation of the Revised Comprehensive Plan.

When this Board took office in January of 2000, the citizens of Loudoun County and elsewhere looked on with great anticipation. With the adoption of the Revised General Plan in July of 2001, the Board took a giant step toward fulfilling the citizens' call to chart a new course for the County.

The adoption of the proposed re-mapping and related draft zoning ordinance revisions are critical to implementing many of the policies contained in the Plan. The Plan, adopted by the Board in 2001, serves as a guide to future development in the county by promoting reasonable residential growth, reducing the number of homes that can be built throughout the county, alleviating future traffic congestion, protecting the rural economy, and preserving environmental and historical features.

The process of adopting the zoning ordinance revisions and new zoning map involved over a year of extensive study and public participation. I would like to thank the many concerned citizens and groups who have taken the time and effort to come forward with comments, ideas, suggestions and criticisms during the zoning process.

More information about the zoning ordinance revisions and new zoning map is available on the Loudoun County website at <http://www.loudoun.gov/compplan/remap.htm>.

County Budget Deliberations Coming Soon

On Monday, February 3rd, County Administrator, Kirby Bowers, released the proposed County Budget for FY2004. Information relating to the budget and budget highlights are available on the County website at <http://www.loudoun.gov/budget>. Public Hearings on the budget will be held in the Board Room at the County Government Center on Thursday, February 20th at 3pm and at 6:30pm.

Loudoun Healthcare Opens Leesburg Hospital Emergency Room



Leesburg welcomed the opening of the Cornwall Emergency Department on January 20th, located on the Cornwall Street hospital grounds in Leesburg. The new facility is situated at the north end of the old hospital, which was closed 5 years ago when it relocated to Lansdowne. Now it is Loudoun Healthcare's new western ER, intended to service residents of Leesburg and Western Loudoun County. This ER is expected to handle 40% of the volume that is currently seen at the main Loudoun Hospital Center in Lansdowne. Hospital administrators hope the Leesburg center will reduce the wait times at the main emergency room.

The new 24/7 Emergency Department will provide diagnostic imaging, lab services and a pharmacy, including 16 examination bays, ambulance transport support as well as a helipad for airlift capacity.

A task force is preparing the paperwork to obtain consent from the Health Department in Richmond to reopen the rest of the Cornwall Street Hospital to provide full-service and in-patient hospital care. If plans follow through, the remainder of the hospital may be reopened in 2 – 3 years.

Legislative Agenda: State Funding Issues on Education and School Construction

The Board of Supervisors adopted a legislative agenda on issues that are expected to be taken up by the Virginia General Assembly during the 2003 session in Richmond. As the upcoming school budget proceedings near, here is the Board's position on the issues of education and state funding;

The Board supports:

A significant increase in state education funding so that the state fully funds its share of the actual costs of meeting the Standards of Quality (SOQ). (Board vote 7-1-1 Delgaudio no, Hiatt, absent for vote. Subsequently, Hiatt asked to be recorded in the affirmative.)

The state constitution requires the Commonwealth to provide "an educational program of high quality" and directs the Board of Education and the General Assembly to accomplish this by developing Standards of Quality. The General Assembly is responsible for assigning the costs of meeting the SOQ between the state and local governments. Every local government in the state pays a disproportionate share of the SOQ as documented by the recent Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (JLARC) study. One of the findings is that the state should be providing \$1.06 billion dollars for the upcoming biennium to meet the estimated costs of the SOQ, based on **current** standards and **current** funding methodology. According to the JLARC report, the state should be providing between \$736 million to \$1.034 billion over the next biennium to cover items that should be considered in the SOQ costs.

The composite index is the state's measure of local ability to pay for the costs of public education. The county's new composite index is .6851. This means for every education dollar needed as recognized by the state, Loudoun pays at least 68.51% of the cost while the state is responsible for 31.49%.

The Board supports:

Additional new state revenues to assist localities to fund new school construction, renovation of public school facilities, technology infrastructure and debt service. (Board vote 7-1-1 Delgaudio -no, Hiatt, absent for vote. Subsequently, Hiatt asked to be recorded in the affirmative.)

Fiscal Impact: Loudoun County Public Schools estimates FY 2004 (the upcoming fiscal year) school fund budget needs at \$400.2 million, a 15% increase over the \$347.9 million appropriated for FY03. This is in addition to the \$107.6 million in school capital expenditures and a projected \$78.5 million in school related debt service expenditures forecast for FY 2004 (an increase of \$18.3 million).

The FY 2004 budget as adopted by the Virginia General Assembly and signed by Governor Warner is estimated to provide Loudoun County \$85.2 million in education funding, which is 21% of the School Boards recommended budget. The percentage of State funding for the school budget has fallen nearly 25% (from 28% to 21%) since FY 2001, which has the effect of forcing more of the burden of paying for public schools on to local citizens.

For Loudoun, the state budget appropriates \$2.7 million and \$3.1 million in school construction funds in FY 2003 and FY 2004 respectively, from the lottery. This is about one-half of the amount provided by the State in FY 2001 and FY 2002. Loudoun will utilize these combined amounts for school construction needs, which represent only two (2) percent of its \$242.0 million in projected school related adopted capital expenditures during the biennium.

In the last 3 years, the Board has nearly doubled local tax funding for public education and per pupil spending has risen over 35% since FY2000. This has not only accommodated the 29% increase in the student population, but helped initiate new educational programs and improved the quality of education in Loudoun Schools.

Leesburg Area Middle School Attendance Boundary Changes

The Loudoun County Public Schools planning staff will begin the process of determining the new boundaries for the Leesburg area Middle Schools. This will affect boundaries for those students at Simpson and Harper Park Middle Schools. The boundary change process involves;



- * Advertisement - of all public meetings in newspapers, school newsletters & local cable TV.
- * Public Information Meetings - to share pertinent demographic, construction and student enrollment information
- * Staff Recommendation - community input and school demographics are used by staff to make a recommended boundary change to the School Board
- * School Board Public Hearing - involving community members input regarding staff recommendation
- * School Boundary Adoption. -following the public hearing the School Board will adopt an attendance boundary at one of it's regularly scheduled meetings.

Although school attendance boundaries do not involve the Board of Supervisors and are strictly a School Board matter, I thought Leesburg area residents would appreciate information about the need for changes in Leesburg area middle school boundaries. This comes as a result of the future opening of Smart's Mill Middle School, located next to the new Frances Hazel Reid Elementary School at the former O'Connor property off of North King Street and scheduled to open during the 2004-2005 school year.

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)

The following is the schedule for the boundary process:

Thursday, February 6 - Community Input Meeting - 6:30 p.m. @ J. Lupton Simpson Middle School

Monday, February 10 - Community Input Meeting - 6:30 p.m. @ Harper Park Middle School

Tuesday, February 25 - Staff Recommendation to School Board for boundary change - 6:30 p.m. @ NSO School Board Meeting Room, 102 North Street, NW, Leesburg

Thursday, March 13 - School Board Public Hearing - 6:30 p.m. @ Harper Park Middle School

Monday, March 17 - School Board Public Hearing - 6:30 p.m. @ J. Lupton Simpson Middle School

Tuesday, April 8 - School Board Adoption boundary change- 6:30 p.m. @ NSO School Board Meeting Room, 102 North Street, NW, Leesburg

If you have any questions about this process or would like demographic, enrollment and other information to evaluate and comment on draft boundary plans, or to develop your own boundary plan for consideration, please contact LCPS Department Of Planning and Legislative Services at phone 703-771-6436 or email: lcpsplan@loudoun.k12.va.us. You may also wish to contact your School Board representative: Leesburg District, Fred F. Flemming, phone-703-777-2947 and Catoctin District, Geary M. Higgins, phone- 540-882-3874, email at: gmh@necanet.org.

I would like to hear from you! For opinion or comment, please contact:

Mark R. Herring, Loudoun County Board of Supervisors

1 Harrison Street, SE, 5th Floor

P.O. Box 7000

Leesburg, Virginia 20177-7000

Phone: (703)777-0204, Fax: (703)777-0421 or Email: mherring@Loudoun.gov